

Washburn-Crosby Milling Complex,  
Mill Office  
701 South First Street  
Minneapolis  
Hennepin County  
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-69-B

44BS  
MINN,  
87-MINAP,  
20-8

## PHOTOGRAPHS

## WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

HABS  
MINN,  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
WASHBURN-CROSBY MILLING COMPLEX,  
MILL OFFICE

HABS No. MN-69B<sup>69-B</sup>

Location: 701 South First Street (Northwest corner of Washburn A Mill Complex), Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota.  
  
USGS Minneapolis South Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Zone 15; 479740:498048D; 479860:498042D; 47982D:498036D; 479700:498040D

Present Owner: Riverside Industries, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1125  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440

Present Occupant: Carlson Sales and Service

Present Use: Offices

Significance: Adjoining the Washburn A Mill, an innovative mill of the Washburn-Crosby Company, the building served as the mill office from 1880 to 1885. This period was significant to the mill industry in terms of technological developments.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION See HABS No. MN-69 for general information.

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: circa 1880. The office came soon after the A Mill was reconstructed and put into operation in 1879 as cited in The Medal of Gold, p. 105.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a partial chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the Register of Deeds, Hennepin County, Minnesota.  
  
1879 Deed September 1, 1899, recorded September 11, 1899, in Book 514, Page 105.  
C.C. Washburn Flouring Mills, Co.  
To  
Washburn Crosby Company  
  
1982 Deed July 7, 1928, recorded July 21, 1928, in Book 1142, Page 317.  
Washburn Crosby Company  
To  
General Mills, Inc.

WASHBURN-CROSBY MILLING COMPLEX,  
MILL OFFICE

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1968 Deed December 27, 1968, Document No. 3756097.  
General Mills, Inc.  
To  
Riverside Industries, Inc.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: No original plans have been located. The General Mills Corporate Archives have furnished linen plans of the A Mill and adjoining office dated 1898. These plans suggest that the entire first floor was used as a dynamo room entered from the center of the north elevation with an L-shaped stair inside. The second floor is divided into two offices entered from an enclosed stairway.
6. Alterations and additions: Building Permit #A14035 (March 1, 1918) allowed the addition of a 24' by 40' one story brick and frame third floor.

Building Permit #A2052 (June 17, 1931) allowed interior alterations and a stairway to be moved in the office. Builder: August Cederstrand Co.

Exterior today seems to indicate a two story addition in brick over the original one story pump house.

Minnesota Historical Society photograph dated January 1971 shows the entry location has been changed.

The interior office space has been partitioned off quite extensively.

B. Historical Context:

The structure served as an office annexed to the new 1879 A Mill from 1880 to 1885. According to the Northwestern Miller (July 2, 1880), the first floor contained the private office of Cadwallader C. Washburn, the principal founder and a Wisconsin political dignitary. The upper floors served as mill offices. The building was adapted to new concerns over the course of the Washburn complex history. The 1904 Sanborn Insurance map labels the building as a dynamo room. In 1918, a third story was added to house a drafting room for the mechanical department. During the mid-nineteenth century, retired millwright, Don Noel, recounts that the first floor held the offices of the plant superintendents, the second floor was used for recreation and classes, and the third floor served as the payroll office.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The structure complements the adjoining A Mill building in terms of materials and style. The A Mill is an example of the Mill industry structure typology.
2. Condition of fabric: The exterior masonry is in adequate condition. The windows and painted metal trim, however, are in poor condition. The exterior has also been subjected to large signage and electrical wiring additions. The interior has been remodeled extensively.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The office is a three story rectangular building approximately 24 feet wide and 40 feet deep. The first and second stories are original to the building. The third story is a 1918 addition.
2. Foundations: Unknown.
3. Walls: The approximately two feet thick walls are of coursed, rusticated limestone with a raised stone course dividing the first and second stories.
4. Structural system, framing: The exterior walls appear to be load bearing with punched window openings. The roof is flat. The original roof was of a slight lean-to variety.
5. Porches, stoops: A non-original white wood exterior vestibule entrance approximately four feet wide and three feet deep with a metal storm door is located in front of the north entrance.
6. Chimneys: None apparent, however, the 1885 Sanborn Insurance map lists fireplaces in offices.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance has an exterior vestibule. The inner door is white, wood, with an upper light.

- b. Windows and shutters: Within the original stone walls, window openings are arched and approximately three feet wide and seven feet high. The north elevation has three regularly placed openings on both stories with two-over-two light double hung metal frames. The west elevation had four regularly spaced windows on both levels originally. Currently the first floor has two rectangular six light windows and one arched window opening filled in with concrete block. The third floor addition has three parts each with nine light windows on the north elevation. On the west elevation, the windows are of five parts each with six lower lights and three upper lights.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Flat, corniced roof on third story addition. Original roof was a slight lean-to.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The cornice is approximately one and a half feet deep, of metal and painted green.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: Carlson Sales and Service occupies this space as offices. Entry on the left side of the north elevation extends into the first floor approximately twenty feet. The front room office space is approximately 18' by 24'. To the rear of this space is a storage room of similar size.
- b. Second floor: Carlson Sales and Service occupies this space as storage. Not allowed access.
- c. Third floor: Vacant. Not allowed access.

- 2. Stairways: As suggested by permits not in original position and enclosed.
- 3. Flooring: The first floor office space is carpeted. Storage space has exposed concrete floors.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: The entry corridor and office space has dark brown wood panelled walls and brown painted trim. Ceilings are suspended with white acoustical tiles and translucent fluorescent light panels.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The doorways are of simple frame construction and the doors are of standard design.
- b. Windows: Exterior windows are original although missing glass in some cases. Insulation has been placed in the north elevation windows.

6. Decorative features and trim: None.

7. Hardware:

8. Mechanical Equipment:

- a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Window/wall air conditioner in front office.
- b. Lighting: Fluorescent and incandescent.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The office is situated on the northwest corner of the Washburn "A" Mill. A gravel parking lot is located to the west of the office.
- 2. Historic landscape design: The exterior surface surrounding the office was most likely gravel.
- 3. Outbuildings: The pump house adjoined the south side of the office. The 1949 Sanborn Insurance map shows the pump house as part of the office configuration. On site inspection suggests that a two story brick addition was erected over the pump house with a window treatment imitating the original office design. This addition may have been part of the 1918 third story addition.

The 1949 Sanborn Map also shows the existing one story concrete building abutting the west elevation of the original office. It is referred to as the Employment Office. According to Don Noel, this served as a museum and reception room containing two sets of old mill stones as artifacts.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: The original plans have not been located. January 1898 linen tracings stamped "C.C. Washburn's Flouring Mills Co. From Survey made January 1898" are in the Corporate Archives of General Mills.

B. Early Views: Minnesota Historical Society Photographs.

MH5.9  
MP3.1W  
r63 Stereoscopic view, circa 1880.

MH5.9  
MP3.1W  
p45 View of Washburn Mills, Hatters Photographic Studio,  
circa 1890.

MH5.9  
MP3.1W  
p66 View of Office Area, circa January 1971.

C. Interviews:

Don Noel, Retired Millwright, General Mills, Inc., February 1986.

Bill Praus, Shop Estimator, General Mills, Inc., February 1986.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Building Permits: A38, A14035, A20502, A33709 Office of the  
Inspector of Buildings, City of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Abstracts and Deed Records, Registrar of Deeds, Hennepin County  
Recorder, Hennepin County Government Center, Minneapolis,  
Minnesota.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Davison's Minneapolis City Directory, C. Wright Davison,  
publisher, 1885-1886 and 1886-1887.

Edgar, William C., The Medal of Gold, Minneapolis: The Bellman  
Company, 1925.

MacDonald and Mack Partnership and Miller-Dunwiddie Architects,  
Inc., St. Anthony Falls: A Preservation and Planning Study for  
St. Anthony Falls Historic District.

Minneapolis City Directories, C. Wright Davison, publishers,  
1880-1881, 1882-1883, 1883-1884, 1884-1885.

Sanborn Insurance Maps: 1885, 1898, 1892, 1904, 1912, 1949.

"The Washburn A", Northwestern Miller, Vol. 10, No. 5, (July 2, 1880), p. 4-5.

- E. Likely sources not yet investigated: General Mills Employee Guide Books, additional issues of Northwestern Miller.

Prepared by:  
Karen Eid  
University of Minnesota  
School of Architecture  
March 1986

#### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was prepared as a class project for Architecture 5142, Historic Building Research and Documentation, a class offered in the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The class project was prepared under the direction of Professor Foster W. Dunwiddie in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Historical data was compiled by Karen Eid, University of Minnesota, March 1986.